

**THIS IS NOT A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

## **Request For Information**

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Table of Contents

Section 1 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES .....	3
1.02 Request for Information Procedure.....	4
1.03 Relevant Dates.....	5
1.04 Submission of Response .....	5
1.05 Contact Information .....	5
1.06 Public Records and Requests for Confidentiality.....	5
1.07 Copyrights .....	7
1.08 Restrictions on Gifts and Activities .....	7
1.09 Contents of the Request for Information (RFI).....	8
1.10 Cost to Vendors.....	8
1.11 Responses / Property of Lottery .....	8
1.12 Source of Information Used by the Lottery in Addition to the Responses.....	8
Section II. VENDOR RESPONSES .....	6
2.01 Identifying Information .....	6
2.02 Vendor References.....	6
Section III. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS .....	
3.01 Central System Design and Function .....	7
3.02 On-Line Terminal Equipment.....	
3.03 Facilities Management.....	
3.04 Communications.....	
3.05 Other Features .....	10

The purpose of a request for information (RFI) is to help you figure out what the marketplace has to offer to address a solution you need. The RFI is written in softer language than the request for proposal (RFP) to encourage vendors to respond. The information that you obtain from the RFI is the material that generally appears later in Section 3 of the RFP, the technical specifications and scope of work that the agency is seeking.

An RFI allows you to visit with all interested vendors and also aids the agency in protecting against any claims of bias and to prevent problems similar to those raised in *Medco Behavioral Care Corp. v. State Dep't of Human Servs.*, 553 N.W.2d 556, 563 (Iowa 1997). Also see, *T&K Roofing Company v. Iowa Department of Education*, 593 N.W.2d 159 (Iowa 1999) (Superintendent sought aid of manufacturer's rep to write the specifications for a roof. Court held no violation of the conflict of interest rules governing education officials. Consultation on the preparation of the bid was not an issue for the Court).

Each section in the RFI is designed to elicit information from the Vendor that you may need as you draft the RFP.

## SECTION 1. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

### 1.1 Background Information for the Project. (Sample language below)

The Iowa Communications Network (ICN) is a state owned, state operated communications network offering the full suite of communications products: voice, data, and video services. The ICN is a telecommunications carrier in accordance with an order entered by the Federal Communications Commission on December 21, 2000. State law restricts the ICN customer base to the following users: any educational institution (public or private), any state agency, any library, any hospital or physician's clinic (except for toll services), and the federal government. The ICN meets all of the Bellcore standards and operates a DMS 500 toll-tandem switch. The ICN owns 3500 miles of fiber optic cable in the state and leases service and/or fiber on an additional 2500 miles. The ICN has 735 endpoints with capacities ranging from three (3) to forty eight (48) DS3's. In addition, the ICN leases in excess of 1600 Local Exchange Company (LEC) circuits serving additional endpoints.

The ICN provides a full suite of voice products to the following large users: all of State government, the three regents institutions, the University of Iowa hospital clinics, 15 Area Educational Agencies, 10 private colleges and universities, and hundreds of schools and libraries. In addition to normal toll services, the ICN operates a Dialable Wideband Compressed Video system with a 42 port MCU and approximately 100 endpoints.

The ICN is seeking information from Vendors who are capable of and interested in providing information (including costs) on, and a demonstration of, an EXAMPLE SYSTEM (System) for ICN. This process is to provide the background information for the possibility of a future acquisition of such a system at the discretion of ICN. The intended purpose of this RFI is to allow all interested Vendors to present Systems that are currently available and possibly also preview Systems or upgrades that may be under development but available for delivery in the next few weeks.

### 1.2 Information Sought.

The \_\_\_\_\_ is seeking **information** from vendors who are interested in providing \_\_\_\_\_ service, \_\_\_\_\_ equipment and \_\_\_\_\_. This process is to provide the background information for the preparation of a Request for Proposals (RFP). The intended purpose of this RFI is to allow all interested vendors to present systems that are currently available and preview systems that are under development.

Pertinent facts about the project, service or product sought can be summarized here.

### 1.3 Request for Information Procedure

This request requires any vendor wishing to submit **information** to respond to this Request for Information (RFI) by 3:00 p.m., Central Time, on \_\_\_\_\_. In addition, vendors may demonstrate their equipment and explain their technology during the weeks of \_\_\_\_\_. Requests to schedule presentations are also due by 3:00 p.m., Central Time, on \_\_\_\_\_.

### 1.4 Relevant Dates

<i>Event</i>	<i>Dates</i>
Issue RFI	
RFI Demonstrations	
Begin RFP Preparation	
Issue RFP (Tentative date)	
RFP Decision - Award Contract (Tentative date)	
Vendor Begins Implementation (Tentative date)	
Conversion Completed - Existing Contract Expires (Tentative date)	

1.4.1 Technical questions about this RFI are to be submitted to the \_\_\_\_\_: attention of X@icn.state.ia.us and demonstration scheduling questions to X on or prior to 4:00 p.m. Monday xmonth/day, 200x. Response to questions will be made to the Vendor by ICN by 4:00 p.m. Wednesday xmonth/day, 200x.

### 1.5 Submission of Response

The vendor's response may be hand-delivered, faxed, e-mailed, mailed to the Department or presented in the form of a demonstration. Responses will not be accepted over the telephone. All responses or requests to schedule a demonstration must be received at the \_\_\_\_\_ by 3:00 p.m., Central Time, on \_\_\_\_\_. Only one vendor demonstration will be scheduled each day. Demonstration day preferences will be scheduled in the order received. We prefer that presentations start at 10:00 a.m., but we will be flexible in scheduling the time of each presentation. Demonstrations will be at the main offices of the Department at \_\_\_\_\_.

### 1.6 Contact Information

The contact at the \_\_\_\_\_ for scheduling, inquiries and comments will be:

Name of Contact	e-mail	_____@_____
Address	Telephone	( ) xxx-xxxx
Address	FAX	( ) xxx-xxxx
City State Zip		

## 1.7 Review and Rejection of RFI Responses

1.7.1 The \_\_\_\_\_ reserves the right to reject any and all responses, in whole and in part, received in response to this RFI at any time. Issuance of the RFI in no way constitutes a commitment by the ICN to award any contract. This RFI is designed to provide Vendors with the information necessary for the preparation of informative response proposals and demonstrations of product. This RFI process is for the \_\_\_\_\_'s benefit and is intended to provide the \_\_\_\_\_ with competitive information to assist in the selection of goods and services. The RFI is not intended to be comprehensive and each Vendor is responsible for determining all factors necessary for submission of a comprehensive response and a complete product capability demonstration. The RFI response and demonstration will not be subject to an RFP type evaluation but only to a review of suggested product performance, cost (*cost may be estimated by Vendor, if an estimate Vendor shall state that it is an estimated or approximate cost*), of processes offered and of abilities to perform services that may be of use to \_\_\_\_\_.

1.7.2 An RFI response may be rejected outright and not reviewed for any one (1) of the following reasons, therefore Vendors are asked to make every effort to meet the RFI timelines and to include the requested information:

1.7.2.1 Failure of Vendor to deliver the response by the due date and time.

1.7.2.2 Failure to include information requested in the RFI.

1.7.2.3 Failure to offer demonstrations.

## 1.8 Public Records and Requests for Confidentiality

1.8.1 **The release of information** by ICN to the public is subject to Iowa Code Chapter 22 and other applicable provisions of law relating to the release of records in the possession of a State agency. Vendors are encouraged to familiarize themselves with these provisions prior to submitting a bid proposal. All information submitted by a Vendor may be treated as public information by ICN unless the Vendor properly requests that information be treated as confidential at the time of submitting the proposal.

1.8.2 **Any requests for confidential treatment of information must be included in a cover letter with the Vendor's bid proposal and must enumerate the specific grounds in Iowa Code Chapter 22 or other legal reasons which support treatment of the material as confidential and must indicate why disclosure is not in the best interests of the public.** The request must also include the name, address and telephone number of the person authorized by the Vendor to respond to any inquiries by ICN concerning the confidential status of the materials.

**1.8.3 Any documents submitted** which contain confidential information must be marked on the outside as containing confidential information, and each page upon which confidential information appears must be marked as containing confidential information. The confidential information must be clearly identifiable to the reader wherever it appears. All copies of the proposal submitted, as well as the original proposal, must be marked in this manner.

**1.8.4** In addition to marking the material as confidential material where it appears, the Vendor must submit one copy of the bid proposal from which the confidential information has been excised. The confidential material must be excised in such a way as to allow the public to determine the general nature of the material removed and to retain as much of the document as possible. These pages must be submitted with the cover letter and will be made available for public inspection.

**1.8.5 The Vendor's failure to request** in the bid proposal confidential treatment of material pursuant to this Section and the relevant laws and administrative rules will be deemed by ICN as a waiver of any right to confidentiality which the Vendor may have had.

## **1.9 Copyrights**

By submitting a response the vendor agrees that the Department may copy the response for purposes of facilitating the evaluation or to respond to requests for public records. The vendor represents that such copying will not violate any copyrights in the materials submitted.

## **1.10 Restrictions on Gifts and Activities**

Iowa Code chapter 68B contains laws which restrict gifts which may be given or received by state employees and requires certain individuals to disclose information concerning their activities with state government. Vendors are responsible for determining the applicability of this chapter to their activities and for complying with these requirements. In addition, Iowa Code chapter 722.1 provides that it is a felony offense to bribe a public official.

## **1.11 Content of the RFI**

**1.11.1** This RFI is designed to provide vendors with the information necessary for the preparation of an appropriate response. It is not intended to be comprehensive, and each vendor is responsible for determining all factors necessary for submission of a comprehensive response.

**1.11.2** The Department reserves the right to modify this RFI at any time.

**1.11.3** Responses should be based on the material contained in this RFI or any other relevant information the vendor thinks is appropriate.

**1.11.4** By submitting a response each vendor agrees that it will not bring any claim or have any cause of action against the Board, the Department, the State of Iowa, or any employee of the Department or the State, based on any misunderstanding concerning the information provided or concerning the Lottery's failure, negligent or otherwise, to provide the vendor with pertinent information as intended by this RFI.

## **1.12 Cost to Vendors**

The Department is not responsible for any costs incurred by a vendor, which are related to the preparation or delivery of the response, any on-site inspection that may be required, or any other activities related to this RFI.

## **1.13 Responses Property of Lottery**

All printed information used to demonstrate a vendor's product becomes the property of the Department. The Department will have the right to use ideas or adaptations of ideas that are presented in the responses.

## **1.14 Sources of Information Used by the Lottery in Addition to the Responses**

The Department reserves the right to contact vendors after the submission of responses for the purpose of clarification and to ensure mutual understanding.

## **1.15 No Obligation to Issue Request for Proposal (RFP)**

The issuance of this RFI does not obligate the Department in any way to issue an RFP for the goods and services described in this RFI.

## **1.16 Vendor Responses Identifying Information**

**1.16.1** State the name and principal place of business of the vendor.

## State of Iowa Service Contracting Guide

**1.16.2** Identify the vendor's type of business entity such as a corporation or partnership.

**1.16.3** State the vendor's place of incorporation, if applicable. At the respondent's discretion, provide an organization chart for the vendor. Include any parent, subsidiary and affiliate companies you feel may be relevant to this presentation.

**1.16.4** State the name, address, email address, telephone number and FAX number of the vendor representative to contact regarding all technical matters concerning this RFI.

### **1.17 Vendor References**

Lists all jurisdictions for which the vendor has \_\_\_\_\_ (describe the work that or service or program you are seeking here)\_\_\_\_\_ and indicate the dates on which each contract began and ended. Please include any applicable references.

## **SECTION 2. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

This section is the heart of the RFI. You describe generally the type of service or product you are interested in or the solution you are seeking. Provide as much detail as you can so that the information you obtain is reliable. You can seek information on a wide range of subjects including estimated cost, functionality, process, service, personnel, product specifications, time frames, and other considerations.

**2.1** Please describe how your equipment, service or product would meet any or all of the following items. We are interested in new and innovative methods of providing service to our customers. Please feel free to include both existing functionality and systems under development.

### **2.2 Service or aspect of the service or product you want to buy**

**2.2.1**

**2.2.2**

### **2.3 Management of the Project**

### **2.4 System Training**

**2.4.1**

**2.4.2**



**2.5 Technical System Publications**

**2.5.1**

**2.5.2**

**2.6 Pre-Deployment Planning**

**2.7 Installation and Implementation (Platform)**

**2.8 System Integration**

**2.9 Test and Acceptance Plan**

**2.10 Estimated Project Completion**

**2.11 Vendor Technical Support**

**2.12 Software Load Tracking and Upgrades**

**2.13 System Redundancy**

**SECTION 3. OTHER FEATURES**

This section allows you to ask the vendor for any other innovative solution that might be available in the market place to solve the problem you have presented in the RFI. Additionally, it allows you to assess state of the art information regarding the goods and services you are seeking.

Is there any other feature, service or option you believe the Department should be aware of in preparation of an RFP? If so, please describe the feature, service product or option and explain how it would improve the program served as identified in this RFI.